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As a systems administrator and programmer, I have followed the
Microsoft anti-trust case with great interest and would now like to
comment on the Proposed Final Judgement. While the Judgement's goal
of "prompt, certain and effective relief" is an admirable one, I fear
that the proposal, if approved, would fall short of bringing effective
relief. Particularly, release of Windows interoperability information
to independent developers is a step in the right direction, but the
Judgement's provisions do not go far enough. The problem of
Microsoft's monopoly will continue unless their ability to impose
proprietary standards is curtailed.

Open Source Software such as the Linux operating system and the KDE
desktop have been mentioned in the trial as potential competitors to
Microsoft, but there is no provision in the Judgement explicitly
allowing Open Source developers access to interoperability
information. Right now, Open Source desktops are a niche in the
market and, for example, if the developers of Open Source desktops had
access to information on Word document file formats, the opportunity
for market gains would increase. But, since the Word document format
is secret and only Microsoft software can be fully compatible,
businesses are stuck with requiring Microsoft software for internal
and external collaboration.

Another example is the Kerberos Authentication Protocol. This was
originally an open standard developed at Massachusetts Institute of
Technology. Eventually Microsoft adopted it for Windows 2000
authentication. However, there is a secret authorisation field in
Microsoft's implementation and, as a result, only a Windows server can
authenticate Windows clients. Microsoft does not yet possess monopoly
power in the server market, but this proprietary pollution of an open

MTC-00023605_0001

standard is an attempt to attain a server operating systems monopoly
by leveraging their overwhelming market share in client operating
systems. Requiring Microsoft to disclose interoperability information
to open source software developers would allow savvy Chief Technology
Officers to better manage their dependencies on Microsoft, an already
dominant vendor.

It is my hope that access of Microsoft interoperability information to
open source developers can create a more competitive market in PC
operating systems and maintain a level playing field in competition
for the market in server operating systems. Such access would not
impinge Microsoft's ability to "innovate", but it curtails their
ability to stifle competition.

Respectfully,

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